

Claims

What is claimed is:

1. A configurable module comprising:
 - (a) one or more configurable data elements, wherein one or more default values for the one or more configurable data elements are available;
 - (b) one or more non-configurable data elements describing the one or more configurable data elements; and
 - (c) one or more transformation instructions that facilitate configuring the one or more configurable data elements.
2. The configurable module of claim 1, wherein the one or more configurable data elements are stored in a data structure associated with the configurable module.
3. The configurable module of claim 2, wherein the data structure is a metadata item description table.
4. The configurable module of claim 1, wherein the one or more non-configurable data elements are stored in a data structure associated with the configurable module.
5. The configurable module of claim 4, wherein the one or more non-configurable data elements are stored in a metadata item description table.
6. The configurable module of claim 1, wherein the one or more transformation instructions are stored in a data structure associated with the configurable module.
7. The configurable module of claim 6, wherein the one or more transformation instructions are stored in a transformation instruction table.

8. The configurable module of claim 2 wherein the data structure includes at least one of a name of a configurable data element, and a semantic meaning for the configurable data element.
9. A data interpretation system, comprising:
a data interpretation component adapted to
receive one or more configurable data elements from a configurable module;
apply one or more transformation instructions from the configurable module
to the configurable data elements to configure the configurable data elements, and
import the configurable data elements into a target data set.
10. The system of claim 9, further comprising a user interface to enable a user to query the configurable module to determine which of the one or more data elements are configurable.
11. The system of claim 9 further comprising:
a merging component adapted to receive one or more updated configurable data elements from the data interpretation component and adapted to provide the one or more updated configurable data elements to a target data set.
12. The system of claim 9 further comprising:
an authoring schema that describes a configurable module.
13. A method for importing a configurable data set into a target data set, comprising:
obtaining one or more data elements from a configurable module;
obtaining one or more transformation instructions from the configurable module;
and
applying the one or more transformation instructions to a copy of the one or more data elements from the configurable module to configure the one or more data elements.
14. The method of claim 13, further comprising:

identifying a target data set; and
inserting the updated data elements into the target data set.

15. The method of claim 13 further comprising:
presenting one or more configuration options to a user;
accepting one or more configuration selections from the user; and
selectively configuring the one or more data elements based on the user's
configuration selections.
16. A computer readable medium containing computer executable instructions
operable to perform the method of claim 13.
17. A method for creating a configurable data module, comprising:
creating a configurable data set having one or more configurable data elements;
and
creating one or more data structures containing information associated with one
or more configurable data elements.
18. The method of claim 17 wherein creating a configurable data set includes:
identifying one or more attributes of the one or more data elements; and
establishing one or more default values for the attributes of the one or more data
elements.
19. The method of claim 17 wherein creating the one or more data structures further
comprises:
identifying one or more locations within a data set that are configurable;
identifying one or more configuration options;
creating one or more instructions concerning how to configure the one or more
locations; and
storing the instructions in the one or more data structures.

20. The method of claim 19, wherein the one or more data structures are stored in the configurable data module.
21. A computer readable medium containing computer executable instructions operable to perform the method of claim 17.
22. A system for importing a configurable data set into a target data set, comprising:
a configurable module having configurable data elements representing a configurable data set and non-configurable data elements representing a portion of the configurable data set;
a user interface for selecting which configurable data element to modify; and
a data interpretation system for receiving the configurable and non-configurable data elements from the configurable module and applying the transformation instructions applicable to the user selections associated with the configurable data elements to enable importing of the configurable data set to the target data set.
23. A data packet adapted to be transmitted between at least two computer processes, comprising:
a configurable module having:
one or more configurable data elements, wherein one or more default values for the one or more configurable data elements are available;
one or more non-configurable data elements describing the one or more configurable data elements; and
one or more transformation instructions that facilitate configuring the one or more configurable data elements.
24. A computer readable medium having stored thereon a data structure, comprising:
a first data field containing one or more configurable data elements, wherein one or more default values for the one or more configurable data elements are available;

a second data field containing one or more non-configurable data elements describing the one or more configurable data elements; and

a third data field containing one or more transformation instructions that facilitate configuring the one or more configurable data elements.